

IOWA SITE INVENTORY

Division of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
26 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240

MAY 29 1981

Site Number 76-016-001
District Name _____
Map Reference # 76-016-001
Topo Map Pocahontas 1:24,000

IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name	<u>Pocahontas County Courthouse</u>				
2. Village/Town/City	<u>Pocahontas</u>		Township	County <u>Pocahontas</u>	
3. Street Address	<u>Court Square</u>				
4. Legal Location	OT	<u>Courthouse Square</u>			
Urban: Rural:	subdivision township	block range	parcel section	subparcel 1/4 section-1/4 section	
5. UTM Location:	zone <u>15</u>	easting <u>363400</u>	northing <u>4732760</u>	Acreage <u>less than 1 acre</u>	
6. Owner(s) Name	<u>Pocahontas County Board of Supervisors</u>				
7. Owner(s) Address	<u>Courthouse</u> (Street address)		<u>Pocahontas</u> (City)	<u>Iowa</u> (State)	<u>50574</u> (Zip)
8. Use:	present	<u>Courthouse</u>	original	<u>Courthouse</u>	

DESCRIPTION

Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, Arch.

9. Date of Construction	<u>1923</u>	Architect/Builder <u>A.H. Neuman & Co., Builder</u>	
10. Building Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> single family dwelling <input type="checkbox"/> multiple family dwelling <input type="checkbox"/> commercial		
	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> other institutional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public <input type="checkbox"/> religious <input type="checkbox"/> agricultural		
11. Exterior Walls:	<input type="checkbox"/> clapboard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> stone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brick <input type="checkbox"/> board & batten <input type="checkbox"/> shingles <input type="checkbox"/> stucco		
	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
12. Structural System:	<input type="checkbox"/> wood frame with interlocking joints <input type="checkbox"/> wood frame with light members (balloon frame) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> masonry load-bearing walls <input type="checkbox"/> iron frame <input type="checkbox"/> steel frame with curtain walls <input type="checkbox"/> reinforced concrete <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
13. Condition:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated		
14. Integrity:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved-if so, when? _____		
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site: Very fine mainspace: metal and marble staircase, panelled soffits, enriched cornices, third floor screens of piers with decorative caps - original globe lighting fixtures - coffered courtroom ceiling, decorative frieze - circular dome skylight with art glass - Alterations: new window sash & doors*			
15. Related Outbuildings and Property:	<input type="checkbox"/> barn <input type="checkbox"/> other farm structures <input type="checkbox"/> carriage house <input type="checkbox"/> garage <input type="checkbox"/> privy <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
16. Is the building endangered?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> yes-if so, why? _____		
17. Surroundings of the building:	<input type="checkbox"/> open land <input type="checkbox"/> woodland <input type="checkbox"/> scattered outbuildings <input type="checkbox"/> densely built-up <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> residential <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
18. Map	19. Photo		
	Roll _____ Frame _____ View _____		

* upper portion of windows blocked in.

SIGNIFICANCE (Indicate sources of information for all statements)**20. Architectural Significance**

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
 b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

The exterior of this courthouse displays a somewhat austere neoclassicism and restrained detail. The interior is particularly noteworthy for its variety of materials and extensive and well-preserved, decorative detail.

21. Historical SignificanceTheme(s) Politics/Government

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
 b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county government, and of the political power and prestige derived from the community's status as the county seat. As center of county government, an Iowa town was reasonably assured of economic and population growth, and a prominent role in local social and political life. The county courthouse represents a significant public investment in a structure built not simply for utilitarian purposes, but also as a monument associated with the historical importance of county organization and development.

See Continuation Sheet

22. Sources (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

Andreas, A.T. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Iowa. Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.

Pratt, LeRoy G. The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City, Iowa: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977.

Stanek, Edward and Jacqueline. Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.

Prepared by _____ Date January, 1980
Address _____ Telephone _____
Organization DHP

FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY**1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY**

- COUNTY RESOURCE FILE
 WINDSHIELD SURVEY
 NATIONAL REGISTER
 GRANTS-IN-AID: _____
 DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

□ REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROJECT:

- OTHER _____
 OTHER _____
 OTHER _____

2. SUBJECT TRACES

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

3. PHOTO IMAGES _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s)

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

The first county seat of Pocahontas County was located at Old Rolfe. Normally the first thing which a county government does after being organized is to construct a public facility in which to conduct its business. The late 1850s in Pocahontas County were lean times. The only surpluses which the settlers had were sunshine, fresh air, and swampland. Since it was difficult to sell sunshine and fresh air, the swamplands were approved for sale in September of 1859 in order to raise money for a courthouse. There were two polling places for the election, and the vote was unanimous with all 16 ballots being cast in favor of the issue.

Upon construction, the brick building with a stone foundation served a dual purpose as both a courthouse and schoolhouse. It measured 36 by 50 feet and the second story was 14 feet high. The bricks were made from local clay and all of the timber was either local oak, elm, or walnut.

The county seat was moved from Old Rolfe to Pocahontas in 1875, whereupon a \$2,600 contract was let by the board of supervisors for the construction of a new courthouse at Pocahontas. It was built on a site set aside for public use as a park, which measured 600 by 800 feet. The old courthouse at Rolfe was sold on January 2, 1877, for \$150 to be used as a church. However, for some reason, the sale was not approved, and the building was sold at public auction the next day for \$200. In July of 1882, the building was again sold to be salvaged for material used in the erection of a house in the new town of Rolfe.

The present Pocahontas County courthouse is a neatly constructed building of classical Greco-Roman design. It was built amidst lovely grounds in 1923.

--from Stanek, Edward, and Jacqueline Stanek,
Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.